



A NEW DAY IN HAWAII

Education

Hawaii's Children First

This election will be a referendum on leadership. It starts with education. The time has come to make a fundamental change.

If we expect accountability from our schools, we must provide our principals and teachers the authority to assume that responsibility. My plan will make sure principals and teachers get the support they need to meet this challenge.

Highest quality education for all must be our first priority because it makes every other social and economic goal we desire for Hawaii possible. Our students are not performing well enough by national measures, which are themselves poor compared to other countries. Yet there are many successes in our schools that are not being recognized or replicated. Instead, students and parents have been marginalized and educators have been criticized and demoralized. No one is able or willing to take responsibility for our education system; no one is held accountable.

Complicating matters is the No Child Left Behind Act, which has led to an oversimplification of what constitutes a good education, too much teaching to the tests, and private companies profiteering at the expense of public school budgets.

If we require high expectations for our students, we must meet that standard ourselves. An Abercrombie Administration will implement a full-scale reorganization of the school system to place decision-making authority within the school. True decentralization does not mean the creation of multiple mini-districts, but rather entrusts principals to manage their staff and resources, serving as CEOs—free from outside mandates and red tape. The focus will be on students and teachers in the classroom. Educators and parents will have ownership of their school. Teachers will be recognized as professionals with attendant respect and reward. Most importantly, every child will receive a comprehensive education program that meets the highest standards and reflects Hawaii's unique values.

As Governor, I will take personal responsibility to restore public confidence in our schools. And I pledge total commitment to see these initiatives through to completion.

Guiding Principles: Education

- The interests of children will always take precedence
- The Governor will take personal responsibility and be accountable
- True decentralization of authority to schools
- High expectations of students
- Student achievement and college and career readiness
- Focus on critical thinking through all subjects, including art and music
- Respect for principals and teachers as professionals
- Making collective bargaining viable again with the interests of children made preeminent
- School-level innovation in all schools
- Safe schools

INCORPORATE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS INTO THE GOVERNOR'S CABINET

A long steady march toward school-level autonomy cannot happen with the current governance structure. Whether the school board is elected or appointed when the next Governor's term begins, I will incorporate the superintendent as a member of the Governor's cabinet to align all parties in implementing the systemic transformation that the public wants.

DECENTRALIZE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Unraveling centralized practices and mandates and empowering principals with autonomy will require systematic change and full commitment by the Governor to see it through over a number of years. The primary components of this effort include:

- **Principals with program control and budget decision-making authority**—Principals will be the ones making budget decisions for their schools. This will require refinement of and commitment to the Weighted Student Formula, "two-tier" bargaining so principals have flexibility to manage their own staff, new procurement policies, and expanded capacities of School Community Councils to ensure community ownership for school decisions.
- **Principal leadership academies**—Existing and newly recruited principals will get extensive training and preparation and be part of a support network. Principals will have the skills to make decisions and be accountable for achieving school goals including budget, staffing, programs, and scheduling.
- **Comprehensive accountability measures**—All stakeholders will participate in setting a rigorous and comprehensive set of accountability measures for grading schools. Rather than just looking at test scores, principals and teachers will be evaluated on a full range of criteria to drive continued improvement and guide school-level decision-making. Parents and students will also have expectations, and the Governor too will be evaluated on progress made so that voters and taxpayers can hold him accountable.

- **Teacher career advancement**—A more robust career path with opportunities and rewards will be designed so that the best teachers can advance in their careers without having to enter administration or leave the classroom. This will include more incentives for teachers to stay in schools, meaningful performance measures, and new roles and rewards for master teachers.
- **Redefining the role of the DOE**—Personnel emphasis will be on deployment to the schools. Some services that may be more efficiently provided by a central agency will be available for schools that want and need them.
- **Innovation in schools, including public charter schools**—All schools will be encouraged and empowered to innovate with online learning opportunities, enrichment activities, creative schedules, and other means to reach high statewide standards and meet the unique needs of their students. Charter schools have an important role in this mix, so the cap will be lifted on their numbers, funding will be realistic and fair, and they will be treated like all other public schools—held accountable for results and expected to share and replicate successes.

COMPETE IN PRESIDENT OBAMA'S "RACE TO THE TOP"

As Governor, I will work with all parties in a collaborative and sustained effort to participate in President Obama's school reform efforts. Hawaii will seek to maximize federal resources to provide for raising academic standards and redesigning curricula, implementing transparent assessment and accountability systems, delivering targeted teacher support, and prioritizing investment in school innovation.

ENSURE SCHOOL READINESS

Investing in young children is the best social and economic investment of public dollars that we can make. A comprehensive early childhood education plan will address the needs of 0 to 5 year olds for the school work to come and will be integrated into the public school system.

GENERATE PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN SCHOOLS

Hawaii's businesses are the clear beneficiaries of public education. With government acting as a catalyst, we will seek private partners, including businesses, foundations, and trusts, to invest in programs and facilities. We will form joint ventures with schools to create new revenue streams. These partnerships will be critical to a decentralized system that that will emphasize public-private ventures in educational innovation.